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ABSTRACT

Because of Florida's rapidly growing ethnic populations, public school teachers of music and other disciplines in the humanities and fine arts in Florida must assess and adjust their curricula to include Latin American and Caribbean music and cultures in their programs. This will give curricular representation to a large percentage of Florida's population and will assist in creating cross cultural understanding among students in Florida's schools. This article is a musical cultural profile intended to introduce music teachers in Florida to the Latin American and Caribbean musical traditions of Florida, to challenge them to consider these important and growing musical minorities, and incorporate their actual sounds, via recordings, live performances, and student participation, into the classroom. In addition, this approach encourages music teachers to make their own profiles of Latin American, Caribbean, and other ethnic musics in their own regions. Not until music teachers desire to understand the ethnic makeup and music of their own areas and strive to learn about it can the music of ethnic minorities ever effectively be introduced into the classroom. As the U.S. immigrant population expands, it behooves music teachers to include immigrant musical and related traditions in the curriculum to gain a deeper understanding of the people who make and enjoy them. (Author/LBG).

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AN INTRODUCTION TO LATIN AMERICAN AND CARIBBEAN MUSICS IN FLORIDA: MULTICULTURAL APPROACHES IN THE MUSIC CLASSROOM

BY
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AN INTRODUCTION TO LATIN AMERICAN AND CARIBBEAN MUSICS IN FLORIDA: MULTICULTURAL APPROACHES IN THE MUSIC CLASSROOM

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ABSTRACT

Because of Florida's rapidly growing ethnic populations, public school teachers of music and other disciplines in the humanities or fine arts in Florida must assess and adjust their curricula include Latin american and Caribbean music and cultures into their programs. This will not only give representation to a large percentage of Florida's population, but will also assist in creating crosscultural understanding among students in Florida's schools.

This article is a musical-cultural profile which is intended to introduce music teachers in Florida to the Latin American and Caribbean musical traditions of Florida, and to challenge them to consider these important and growing musical minorities and incorporate their actual sounds, via recordings, live performances, and even student participation, into the classroom. In addition, the approach will encourage music teachers to make their own profiles of Latin American, Caribbean, European, Native American, Jewish, Arabic, African, Oriental, and/or African-American musics in their own regions. Not until the music teacher first desires to understand the ethnic makeup and music of his or her own city, state, and/or region (or is mandated by the state government to teach about it), and secondly strives to learn about it, can the musics of such ethnic minorities ever be effectively introduced into the classroom. As many of our states expand and swell with immigrants from every part of the world, it behooves us as music teachers to include their musical and related traditions into our curricula in order to gain a deeper understanding of the people who make and enjoy them.

Introduction

Florida represents one of the fastest growing states in the United States, and much of its population increase is due to immigrations from countries "south of the border." Because of Florida's rapidly growing ethnic populations, its public school teachers of music and other disciplines in the humanities and fine arts must assess and adjust their curricula to include Latin American and Caribbean musics and other cultural products into their programs. This will give representation to a large percentage of Florida's population and will assist in creating cultural understanding among students in Florida's schools. Such reassessment of music curricula is also practical because most of the musical concepts that music teachers normally teach (such as rhythm, melody, texture, harmony, performance techniques, etc.) are represented in the varied musical traditions of Latin America and the Caribbean.

This article is intended to introduce music teachers in Florida to the Latin American and Caribbean musical traditions of Florida, to challenge teachers to consider these traditions as viable and accessible tools for teaching music, and to encourage them to incorporate Latin American and Caribbean music, via recordings, live performances, and student participation, into their existing curricula. In addition, suggestions as to how the teacher can develop lesson plans based on Latin American and Caribbean musics are presented in the conclusion.

The population of Florida includes people from all of the countries south of the United States. They speak any one or more of the common Latin American and/or Caribbean languages such as Spanish, Portuguese, French, Creole, Mayan, Quechuan, and others. In addition, their homelands include the Caribbean basin, South America, Central America and Mexico. Taken as a whole, their languages and homelands reveal a diversity for which the terms "Latin American" and "Caribbean" hardly function as a descriptive tools. Part of Florida and Florida's school classrooms have become microcosms of this Latin American and Caribbean diversity.

Despite this current diversity, there were several historical situations which helped to unify these regions of the Americas: first were the Native American populations which, although themselves diverse, contributed one layer, perhaps the foundation, to the American cultural mosaic; second were the Africans and their descendants; and third were the Europeans, primarily the Spanish, the Portuguese, the French, and the English. The sheer numbers of these populations are staggering. It is estimated, for example, that nearly 45 million Native Americans existed in pre-Conquest Latin America, compare to only about 5 million in North America [Charles Wagley;personal communication (Jun 17,1983)]. Likewise, the number of African and Africa-descended slaves in Latin America and the Caribbean far exceeded the numbers in North America, with as many as 12 million Africans brought to the former regions compared to about 3 million to the United States. The musical contributions of these populations,as well as the Europeans, to Latin American and Caribbean music is often obscured by their racial and cultural mix. Nevertheless, one can still refer to the present musical types by combining their cultural origins, at least as a point of reference, and indicating the present geographic location where the musical types first occurred.

The remainder of this article is organized by establishing five such categories: (1) African-Spanish derived music, (2) African-French derived music, (3) African-British derived music, (4) Spanish derived music and (5) Native American-Spanish derived music. These categories are basic to an understanding of many of the Latin American and Caribbean musical traditions found in Florida.

African-Spanish derived music

The largest segment of the Latin American population in Florida is Cuban, and there are several types of music and musical events that represent urban and rural Cuban culture. These include *punto guajiro*, *Santeria*, and *salsa*. Although Cuba is a cultural mixture of Spanish and African musical characteristics, one can place Cuban music on a Spanish-African continuum because punto guajiro displays the most Spanish elements, Santeria the most African, and salsa reveals a unique mixture of the two. Because punto guajiro is more Spanish than African, therefore, it will be discussed under Spanish Derived Music.

Santeria is a syncretic Cuban religion found in Miami and Tampa which blends West African Yoruba gods, beliefs and religious practices with Catholic saints. Literally Spanish for "Worship of the saints," the religion is also known in Cuba as *lucumi*, a word derived from the Yoruba language of Nigeria. Foremost in the religious practice of Santeria is the communication between mortals and the combined African-Catholic saints known as *orisha*. Through instrumental rhythmic structures and songs using responsorial patterns, musicians and dancers communicate with the orisha. Most Santeria music displays strong African retentions, and is performed by ensembles of *guiro* (literally "gourd") rattles, *bata* drums, or both. Sommers (1986, p. 14) writes that "The guiro ensemble usually consists of three large beaded calabash rattles known as *guiros* or *acheres* which come in different sizes and are played by shaking or striking with the hand." The guiro or achere used for Santeria is nearly identical West African rattle made from a hollowed gourd and covered by a net whose strands are threaded with dried seeds, beads, or shells. When shaken, the beaded net strikes against the dried gourd and produces swishing as well as percussive sounds. Also know as *chekeres*, the rattles are played in groups of three, and each instrument is a different size (Urfe 1984, p. 175). The musician interlock and interweave their individual rhythmic patterns and improvisations in such a way as to produce a complex fabric of sound, reminiscent of African musical ensembles. *Bata* drums, hourglass shaped membranophones with two animal skin heads, are also fashioned from Yoruba prototypes. Like in the guiro ensemble, three bata drums of differing sizes are performed together. One of them has the magical function of calling the orisha with drum language, while the others maintain steady ostinato rhythms.

Salsa is a unique mixture of African and Spanish musical elements in which the final result is very danceable. One might use the word "hot" to describe this music, and that is why the term "*salsa*" which means "hot sauce," was chosen. During the past several decades, salsa has been the dominant urban musical expression of the Afro-Spanish Caribbean people, including not only those in Cuba, Puerto Rico, and New York, but also those in Miami, Tampa, Gainesville, and Tallahassee. Its influence is also felt in much of Spanish-speaking Latin America, including Venezuela, Panama, Mexico, and other countries close to the Caribbean.

The basic pulse of salsa is four, which is held together by the rhythm of the wooden *claves*, struck together in either a two-plus-three or three-plus-two pattern. Other musical characteristics are the use of the basic Cuban song form known as the *son*; responsorial vocal techniques between a lead singer and a small chorus; extensive use of short repeated patterns (riffs or ostinatos) in the instruments and by the chorus; heavy percussion, often featuring African derived membranophones such as *congas*, *timbales*, and *bongos*, and *idiophones* such as a *double bell* or *cowbell*, and *claves*; vocal improvisations by the lead singer; instrumental jazz improvisations; a steady bass line which is always slightly ahead of the beat; and extensive use of syncopation. While all of these characteristics reveal a strong African influence, the melodic instruments, the melodies and harmonies, the largely strophic formal structure, and the Spanish language are all derived from European musical influences.

Salsa melodic and harmonic instrumentation is basically determined by the three main types of salsa ensembles: *charanga*, *conjunto*, and big band. In charanga, the main melodic-harmonic instruments are several violins and a flute which often improvises; in *conjunto* or "combo" type, several trumpets or trombones play melodies and harmonies reinforced by the Cuban *tres*, a guitar-type instrument with six strings in three double courses, or the Puerto Rican *cuatro*, a guitar-type instrument with ten strings in five double courses. In big band salsa as many as five trumpets, several trombones, and several saxophones play melodies, harmonies, ostinatos, and jazz solos. Another popular salsa type found in Miami is *songo*, a jazz-fusion style which features numerous Afro-Cuban percussion instruments borrowed from Santeria that are added to the conjunto or big band salsa ensembles.

Two characteristics of salsa are not always immediately perceptible by non-Caribbean listeners. First, Afro-Caribbean jazz improvisations are diatonic rather than chromatic as in American jazz, and are very rhythmic rather than virtuosic. Second, the lead singer often uses or improvises nostalgic song texts which may describe the beauty of a Caribbean homeland, relate the excitement of dancing, describe the thrill of seeing a pretty girl, and so forth. Together with the African derived percussion elements, the African derived responsorial texture, the familiar contemporary sounds of Western brasses and woodwinds, jazz harmonies, improvisations, and the layers of rhythmical patterns and melodic ostinatos, salsa is a music and dance combination that is synonymous with an urban, Afro-Spanish, Latin American or Caribbean *fiesta*.

A natural development from the various types of salsa, one which includes more experimentation and American jazz innovation, can be termed Latin jazz. One of the foremost innovators of Latin jazz in the United States is the virtuoso Puerto Rican flutist, singer, and composer, Nestor Torres. Torres' group, known as "Spice" has created a sensation in Miami nightclubs as well as at conferences and universities throughout Florida.

The vallenato ensemble of Emigdio Ortiz from Colombia

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Similar to salsa for its blending of African and European musical characteristics is Colombian *vallenato* music. In the accompanying photograph can be seen the *acordion*, a musical instrument of European origin, instruments from other ethnic backgrounds, such as the membranophonic *bongo* or *caja*, *conga*, and *timbales* of African provenience, the *guacharaca* or *guiro* (bamboo or gourd scrapers) of Native American or African origin, and the *bombo* (double skinned drum) of Spanish origin. Such mixtures of instruments are often found in the musical ensembles of the Colombian coast, where slavery at one time brought together many diverse cultural traits. Music of this type is played in small ensembles and is common in the daily lives of the Colombian peasant farmers. A Miami vallenato group, lead by Emigdio Ortiz, plays a variety of Colombian music and dance genres, including the *cumbia*, a lively dance form with African and Native American derivations. Ortiz's ensemble, also incorporating energetic salsa characteristics, is highly acclaimed among Miami's large Colombian population.

African-French Derived Music

The main geographic origin of the music in this category is Haiti, although other French speakers from the French Antilles are found in Miami. Most of the music which accompanies the many Haitians who migrate to Florida is either religious or popular, and popular musical forms such as *compas* and *mini-jazz* have been introduced to many Miamians through radio and music clubs. Originally a big-band style of *meringue* dance music, *compas* was begun in Haiti in the 1940s by Nemours Jean Baptiste (Bergman, 1985; 86-7). Added to this were the American influences of jazz and rock, resulting in the present compas styles played by bands such as Miami's Magnum, Odyssey II, Les Doyens, and the Islanders. Another recent musical ingredient in Haitian popular music is a West African style of electric guitar playing joined with Haitian-styled drumming and African-derived responsorial singing in French and Patois. An occasional use of trumpets and/or other wind instruments contribute to making modern compas a loud and rhythmically driving style that is very danceable.

African-British Derived Music

The English-speaking Caribbean includes Trinidad and Tobago, Barbados, Jamaica, the Virgin Islands, the Bahamas, St. Lucia, and other islands in the Leeward group. Except for the British Virgin Islands, these countries are independent today. One might think that the common elements of British rule, imposition of the English language, and the importation of African slaves would have brought about a unified musical culture in the colonial African-British Caribbean, but, the opposite is true. Trinidad and Tobago, for example, originated the steel band, *calypso*, and *soca* (**so**ul **ca**lypso), while Jamaica developed *reggae* and its variants. The other islands, like wise, developed their own musics, although the Trinidadian and Jamaican forms have greatly influenced the popular culture of the smaller islands.

The origin of steel band is interesting, vague, and probably highly romanticized. A steel drum is, first of all, an idiophone which is constructed from a special type of 55 gallon oil drum. Its top is heated, hammered chiseled, and formed into shapes that emit brilliant sounds when struck with padded sticks. The origin is very recent, although the idea for it probably goes back to Africa, where slit drums from hollowed logs were and are still used as melodic instruments capable of producing numerous pitches. In Trinidad prior to World War II, the descendants of the Africans produced rhythmic music with stick and bamboo bands, the latter called *tamboo bamboo*. These instruments were played by street gangs who often used them for fighting as well as music-making, causing their use to be outlawed by the government. During World War II, numerous empty oil drums were discarded on the beaches by the American navy, and local innovation soon turned them into musical instruments. Borrowing from the Western musical tradition, the tuned steel drums, called "pans," are grouped into sizes from soprano to bass, incorporating Western harmonies to accompany the melodies of popular calypsos. The steel band tradition became so virtuoso and complex that this popular art music of Trinidad and Tobago today often includes European symphonic literature and contemporary compositions in its repertory.

One of the foremost steel bands in Florida today is the Silver Stars Steelband headed by Jr. Pouchet. A regular ensemble at Walt Disney World, the Silver Stars Steelband is also held in high esteem in Trinidad and Tobago for having developed a type of chamber music steel drum ensemble. Groups of similar size are also found in St. Petersburg and Tallahassee, often consisting of American players.1

Because of American jazz influence, many Caribbean musicians have formed combos that feature a lead "pan" player who improvises in a jazz idiom, accompanied by a conga drum, electric bass, electric guitar, electric piano and/or other modern jazz-rock instruments. Foremost in this category are Trinidadians Othello, a virtuoso jazz musician who lives in Miami, and Kirby Rambert in Tampa.

The roots of reggae in Jamaica are quite different from the origins of popular music in Trinidad and Tobago. Reggae grew out of the music and protest philosophy of the Jamaican religious movement known as Rastafarianism, which fused with the musical forms that developed from the nineteenth century song and dance form known as *mento*. The term "reggay" was first used in Jamaica in 1969, meaning "ragged," "everyday," or "regular" (Bergman 1985:28). A few years later it was Bob Marley who with the Wailers, firmly established reggae as one of the most popular musical art forms of the Caribbean. Reggae bands abound in Florida, often times as eclectic groups which incorporate various types of Caribbean musics into their repertories.

Another African-British tradition found in south Florida is *junkanoo*, a Bahaman masquerade-dance with percussion dominated music. It is performed traditionally during the Christmas season in the British West Indies. Junkanoo was brought to Key West approximately one hundred years ago by Bahaman immigrants whose descendants still perform junkanoo music and dance, although it is modernized with the addition of conga drum, maracas, piano and electric bass instead of hand-made drums as their ancestors used. Miami's junkanoo groups, however, perform the more traditional Bahaman masquerade-dance music with handmade costumes and instruments.

Spanish Derived Music

Spanish derived musics of Cuba, Mexico, Argentina, Venezuela, and Colombia are represented through several traditions in Miami and Tampa.

An ancient Spanish musical form with a large Cuban following in Miami and Tampa is *punto guajiro*, about which has been written.

"The heritage of Renaissance Spain lives on in the punto guajiro, one of many Latin American musical verse forms. In the punto guajiro, a singer/poet improvises themes of love, comic double entendre, and episodes of daily life, often preserving the classical Spanish rhyme scheme. Occasionally, singers may engage in song duels, or competitions of improvisatory skill." (Sommers, 1986, p.13)

These sung verses are functionally similar to song types found in many regions of Latin America, such as Brazil, Chile, and Venezuela. The term "*guajiro*" usually refers to the white peasant in the Caribbean, and the *punto guajiro* type of song form, also called *decima* (ten lines per verse), is found in many areas where the Spanish settled. The musical instruments used in punto guajiro reveal Iberian traditions as well as ethnic mixing. The three Spanish derived musical instruments are the guitar, the *laud* or lute, and the *tres*. This type of guiro, in contrast to the one used in Santeria, is a scraped serrated gourd that is derived either from a Native American or African prototype.

The most popular form of Mexican music in Florida is *mariachi*, principally found in the greater Miami area. Originally a rural form, mariachi derives its name from the French word for marriage because it was the basic type of wedding music for the European aristocracy. In this form mariachi featured vocals, violins, guitars, *vihuelas* (small guitars), and a harp. The modern urban form also includes violins, guitars, and the vihuela; added to these, as replacements for the harp, are trumpets and the *guitarron* (a bass guitar with a big resonating body), all European derived instruments.

The music of venezuela is represented in Florida with *musical llanera* or music of the *llanos*, Venezuela's great plain and grassland. Whereas the guitar is the prominent instrument of the American cowboy and the Argentinean *gaucho*, the diatonic harp is the preeminent musical instrument of the Venezuelan *vaquero*, or cowboy. The photograph shows an ensemble made up of a Venezuelan harp, an instrument of spanish derivation, accompanied by the spanish derived small four-stringed guitar known as the *cuatro* and a pair of *maracas* of Native American or African derivation.

A Venezuelan trio, featuring Jesus Rodriguez on harp.

Most of the songs performed by the harp, either as a solo instrument or in the trio, are Spanish derived waltzes and lively dances. South Florida has several excellent Venezuelan harpists who perform regularly. One such artist, Jesus Rodriguez from Naples, has received funds from the Florida Department of Stats Apprenticeship Program, to teach the instrument to young people.

Native American-Spanish Derived Music

North of Miami, in Indiantown near Lake Okeechobee, is a small migrant worker community of Kanjobal Mayan people from Guatemala. As political refugees in exile, these native inhabitants from Middle America arrived in Florida with few material possessions. Their traditional music, however, was firmly etched in their minds. It was not long before it became possible for the musicians among them to acquire one of their culture's most treasured musical instruments, a diatonic *marimba*.

The Guatemalan group Marimba K'anil.

Their marimba is a xylophone with its keys arranged in a major scale of about four octaves. Each key or slab has a tuned resonator box hanging underneath it, and each box has a small hole in it that is covered with a thin piece of pig or goat intestine which buzzes like a kazoo when the key is struck with a mallet. Although a similar technique is found with the marimbas of Africa, the Guatemalan marimba and its music reveal no other African characteristics. The performers claim no African influence for their instrument or music. Performed by as many as four players lined up one side of the instrument, their music varies from popular *sones* to religious songs associated with life cycle events.2 Because it mixes Native American language and culture, Spanish melodies and harmonies, and African instrumentation, this musical tradition is one of the most unique in Latin America.

Conclusion

Latin American and Caribbean musical styles in Florida are extremely varied. This article has attempted to reduce these styles to their essential components and to tie these components to their African, European, and Native American origins. Florida's teachers are encouraged to include these musics, and that from other ethnic groups, into their present educational curricula. A general analysis of this music has been presented for two reasons. First, an understanding of Latin American and Caribbean musical styles is needed before lessons can be developed and second, it demonstrates that basic information concerning this music is accessible to teachers and students. To repeat an earlier point, the inclusion of such music into the school music curriculum will represent a significant and growing percentage of Florida's

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population and will assist in creating cultural understanding among students in Florida's schools.

The process of developing lesson plans from the various musics described in this article depends on the teacher's knowledge and understanding of the musical traditions. The first step is to learn about the traditions through reading, listening and studying recordings, attending performances, interviewing musicians, and ideally, performing some of the music. A very useful approach to developing lesson plans is to follow the instructional design steps outlined by Dick and Carey (1985). Called "Components of the Systems Approach Model," their ten steps can here be simplified by stressing the four middle and most substantive steps: writing objectives, writing tests, developing teaching strategies, and designing the instruction. Crucial to learning is the development of objectives, consisting of a statement of what you want the learners to know. It could be as simple as "the students will distinguish between the European-derived and the African-derived instruments in a salsa orchestra," or as musically specific as "the students will define, identify, and demonstrate syncopation." Crucial to the preparation for learning is the development of teaching strategies,. The teacher must ask him or herself,"how will I get across to my students what it is I want them to learn?"

Some basic examples of teaching strategies based on Latin American and Caribbean musics in Florida could include the following: taking students to or having them attend folk festivals or street fairs (such as the Miami Folk Festival or the Ybor city Folk Festival), playing musical examples or showing videos in class, bringing musicians and/or dancers into the classroom for demonstrations, discussing the ethnic populations in the state and explaining how their corresponding musics are used, indicating on a globe the country where the music originated from, having children interview their parents about their musical traditions (regardless of ethnic origin), defining terms in class, listening to recordings in the library or outside of class, giving small group assignments where one student may teach his or her music to another student, musician or dancer, performing basic rhythmns or singing songs in class, and so forth.3 By teaching Latin American and Caribbean musics as points of departure, the Florida teacher can easily expand into European, African, and/or other musics as they can serve as interesting and important points for comparison with European-derived or other musics. To include the musics of Latin America and the Caribbean however, may be at best a token effort unless the teacher has non-hierarchal reasons for doing so. The objectives of these multicultural approaches are to eliminate ethnocentrism, and to teach music as a living phenomenon that will give value to the people who produce it and for whom it is an important aspect of daily life.

END NOTES

1. "Stateside" is a term often used to denote the size of a basic steel band found in many American high schools. The instrument sets (one player per set) in a "stateside" steel band include a "ping pong" or lead pan, a lead tenor (two pans), a double second (two pans), a triple guitar (three pans), cello (four pans), four bass (four pans), and a six bass (six pans).

2. A *son* is a folk song style found in Mexico and parts of Central America. It is usually typified by triple of 6/8 meter. The plural form is *sones.*

3. Seven lesson plans pertaining to the musics of the Caribbean and Latin America have recently been published by Olsen and Ahyoung in *Multicultural Perspectives in Music Education* (Anderson and Campbell 1989:78-117), and several of them pertain directly to musics in Florida. In addition, Volume 2 of the series *Sounds of the World*, entitles "Music of Latin America: Mexico, Ecuador, Brazil" (Olsen, Sheehy, and Perrone, 1987), includes three cassette tapes and a study guide on how to use those musics in the classroom.

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